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(C) 125 Q Dairy Disposal 10

Q This policy of not allowing politics to interfere with private -- how long have we had that policy?

A I think that is a standard policy. The last Olympics, in Moscow, were an exception to the policy.

Q On the butter sales. The Washington Post had a hard-hitting editorial on these butter sales. Again, does the State Department concur with the policy of selling to New Zealand and then on to the Soviet Union by the back door?

A As you know, the CCC has over two hundred thousand tons of butter in its stocks and they've got to be marketed or stored. Given the high cost of storage, the Administration is actively exploring various marketing alternatives, so the question is how and where to dispose of the butter and it's under interagency review. They're both domestic and international concerns. The State Department is working very closely with the Department of Agriculture and other concerned agencies to find an appropriate solution which best serves our interests.

There are a number of possible solutions, but there have been no decisions taken, and I don't think I would want to get into characterizing the positions of one department or another. Frankly, I do not have them, but I didn't ask for them because I don't think it's an appropriate thing to do.

Q Are you concerned that a lot of reaction among the U.S. public will be similar to the reaction in the Washington Post?

A I think we ought to wait to see what the decisions are before we try and judge reactions.

Q On that question, selling butter to New Zealand is a little bit like selling oil to Saudia Arabia. Why New Zealand of all countries?

A Well, again, I said there are a number of possible solutions but no final decisions have been taken about how this disposal of the butter will be handled, and I don't want to prejudge it.

Q Why was New Zealand even on the list of countries considered? It's obvious that they're not going to consume it. They're going to resell it to somebody else, probably the Soviet Union. Why then do you go through what appears to be a persiflage to disguise a sale to the Soviet Union?

A Let me look into the whole question of New Zealand and the butter in that respect and see what I can get for you on that.

Q While you're looking, will it be sold under the New Zealand label or the American label?

A Again, that question depends on the outcome of the decisions. Why New Zealand is involved at all is a question which I could look into.

Q Does the State Department still oppose disposal of this butter to the Soviet Union?

A I don't have an answer for you on that. Let me look into that question as well.

Q Alan, the transcript in the Press Office reveals that last Wednesday when a reporter on Capitol Hill asked Secretary Haig about a Washington Post page one story reporting Haig told Weinberger that West German troops are better than U.S. troops, Secretary Haig replied, and this is a quote, "When did I say that? I never said that."

I have a two-part question. If the Secretary did not hesitate to deny the accuracy of this Post story, why did you and Dean Fischer, as his spokesmen, refuse to comment or even take the question?

A I really don't want to get into rehearsing history. I will also note --

Q History? It's last week. It's not ancient.

A May I answer?

Q Sure.

A Thank you. I would note two things. One, when you asked the question of me, I was not aware that Secretary Haig had made that statement although he had made it. You were aware of it --

Q I was not.

A Oh, I'm sorry. I thought when you came up to me afterwards with that piece of paper --

A Yes. In addition to our objection to the Cuban presence and so on and the fact that we're convinced that the conflict in Angola is closely related to the Namibian conflict, we believe that progress on one side will encourage progress on the other; therefore, we continue to make clear our beliefs on the Cuban troop withdrawal and the necessity for national reconciliation.

In areas, other than economic, we continue to work with Angola and the other front-line states -- South Africa, to Contact Group -- in a search for internationally acceptable solutions leading to the independence of Namibia. So what I'm saying is that in commercial terms, in terms of looking for a Namibian solution, we continue to work with Angola.

There are obviously things which are of great concern to us with regard to the Cuban presence, so that's the nature of the --

Q I think that the question here is whether this Administration is beginning to soften its opposition to any kind of relations with Angola, if there's been any slight shift in that?

A The Administration was aware, when it took office, of the decision made last year by the Ex-Im Bank to approve the loan to Gulf Oil and SONANGOL. During the review of African policy conducted in the early weeks of the Administration, the decision was made to allow the loan to proceed as part of the Administration's overall policy towards Angola.

Q My favorite rancid butter topic, and you've probably seen that Secretary Block did confirm the sale.

A Yes. Well, do you want to you state your question in terms so everybody knows what you're talking about?

The question is New Zealand butter. There have been no decisions taken, and the issue is still under consideration.

Q I guess Block is coming out a lot further, I was told yesterday the New Zealand authorities have confir it.

A I feel fairly confident in what I'm saying.

Q Wait a minute. Do we have a policy split here between Haig and Block? Does Haig object to this sale?

A I have no idea what the bureaucratic circumstances are, but in looking into the question, anticipating it might be asked, the fact is that the review is still under way. No decision has been made.

Q Will you keep us -- all right. Another topic for the review. Anything on the Springbok tour of the U.S.?

A No. I have nothing.

Q Would you let us know about those, please? would you volunteer about them, please?

A Okay.

Q I'd like follow up on George's earlier question about the Caribbean Basin and the Nassau meeting. This is something that we've heard about for six weeks now, and things have been floated and articles have been written and there's a lot of attention paid to it. And the State Department is perfectly aware that we've been very interested in hearing about the Nassau meeting since it was announced a week and a half ago, and yet there's no briefing.

Should one conclude, therefore, that there really is no plan as well? I mean, why is it that there is no briefing?

A There is no briefing because one could not be arranged.

Q How is it that we'll find out about the Caribbean Basin plan six weeks after it was first raised?

A I don't have an answer for you on that. Are you going?

Q Unfortunately not.

A Unfortunately not.

Q But I haven't been given any incentive from here either.